

February 12, 2021

Dear State Employees,

As we all continue to confront this pandemic, the Gianforte administration is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment. Governor Gianforte recently updated his COVID-19 guidance, and we want to address questions you may have about it. The Governor and his staff continue to monitor and evaluate work situations and the impact of COVID-19 in Montana and remain flexible in addressing issues as they arise.

State employees should continue to follow the guidance about face coverings and remote work previously provided by the State Human Resources Division.

Face Masks

1. Employees working in public-facing roles must continue to wear face masks at work. Employees, who work in the office but who do not work in public-facing roles or in the areas open to the public, must wear face masks when in meetings with others and when in common areas. Employees do not have to wear masks when alone in their private offices.
2. A face covering that covers the mouth and nose is required in all common areas and shall be worn by state employees, contractors, and visitors in state-owned or state-leased facilities. Common areas include but are not limited to hallways, stairwells, breakrooms, and restrooms.
3. Agencies with public-facing offices should continue to post signage indicating individuals aged five and over must wear a mask while inside state-owned or -leased facilities. Approved signage for work areas can be found [here](#).

Remote Work

The previously-issued [Return to Worksite Stage One Guidelines](#) provides detailed information about remote work and guidelines for those employees working in State offices or facilities. An employee who is vulnerable or high risk, or resides with someone who is high risk, should consult with their manager to establish a remote work schedule. In all other circumstances, you should, with authorization from your supervisor, follow the directions below:

1. Employees who can effectively work remotely should continue to do so.
2. Employees whose job responsibilities are necessary for agencies to effectively operate public-facing offices should continue working from their regular worksites.
3. Employees whose job responsibilities include field work, e.g. appraisers and inspectors, may be asked to continue or resume their job duties following the mask guidance that is in place.
4. Employees who cannot work remotely because their job duties do not allow for remote work should continue to report to their regular work locations.

As of now, the current telework guidance for State Employees remains in place. Agencies should not be drafting or implementing return to work plans. A plan will be shared to provide guidance on effectively returning to work when deemed safe by the administration.

COVID-Related Leave Time

The provisions for using COVID-related leave remain the same and are detailed in the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act Policy](#).

You may continue to use the leave provided by the federal law and the original 80 hours of paid COVID sick leave provided by the State, if you have not already exhausted the leave originally provided. No additional paid leave will be offered if you have already used all available COVID paid leave.

COVID sick leave or regular sick leave (SLT) may be used when receiving your COVID-19 vaccination and to cover any side effects you may experience.

Thank you for ensuring the safety of all Montanans by wearing a face covering, practicing social distancing, and continuing to work remotely as applicable.

If you have questions, please contact your agency HR professionals or the State Human Resources Division who are ready to assist.

Thank you,

Director Giles, Department of Administration